

Our nation's freedoms and security could not have been won or maintained but for the remarkable patriots who have served in uniform. In the past seventy years alone, the presence, sustained pressure, and combat superiority of our armed forces has enabled our nation to stop Adolf Hitler from expanding his brutality, bring Soviet-led communism to its knees, deter evil dictators from aggression, and deny radical jihadists many of their sanctuaries, among many other accomplishments. Their selfless service and great sacrifices, coupled with the unparalleled ingenuity of American engineers and manufacturers, has for decades made our military the finest in the world and protected our way of life.

It is only right for our nation to repay our veterans' sacrifices by providing them with appropriate benefits and access to the best possible medical care. I have supported annual pay increases for our military personnel and legislation that provided our troops serving after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks with first-rate educational benefits. Additionally, I supported legislation to allow retired veterans with a 50% or higher disability rating to collect both military retired pay and their VA disability benefits. I have also supported efforts to provide Reservists and members of the National Guard—troops that have provided an invaluable contribution to our missions in Afghanistan and Iraq—with enhanced benefits. Further, I have worked to ensure that our troops suffering from traumatic brain injury (TBI), the signature wound of the war against radical jihadists, get the treatment they need to recover.

Meanwhile, I have worked with our local veterans' communities to expand services for veterans in Northern California. Historically, the Department of Veterans Affairs has not had a large presence in rural areas like ours, but that is changing. Over the years the veterans' clinics in Chico and Redding have expanded substantially in both personnel and services. Further, the VA has opened a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Yuba City while veterans in Siskiyou County can now get primary care in Yreka. I also strongly backed the development of a veterans' cemetery in Shasta County, and supported the Redding Veterans Home that is currently under construction. These improvements have improved the quality of life for local veterans, sparing many the time and expense of driving long distances to receive medical care and providing them with peace of mind and certainty as they prepare to make end-of-life decisions. I will continue to work with local veterans in support of additional improvements in care and service.

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